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Nicaragua: Interview With Clemente Guido, National Coordinator Of Conservative Democratic Party (pcd)

by Deborah Tyroler

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[The PCD participated in the 1984 elections, with Guido as its presidential candidate. For the 1990 elections, the PCD is running its own presidential slate once again. The interview below, which took place prior to the last week in September, was distributed by the Nicaraguan Embassy, Netherlands (The Hague, Netherlands), via GeoNet, a commercial computer network. One of the GeoNet systems ("GEO2"), employed by users in the United Kingdom and members of international non-governmental organizations, routed the interview on 10/17/89 to Peacenet, a non-profit computer network based in San Francisco, Calif.] Q.: What is the role of the Nicaraguan resistance after the Tela Accords? Guido: They have two options: go to the US or to other countries who may want to accept them or return to Nicaragua and fight the real war. If they choose the latter, they will have problems. I think only those who have an ideology to defend will [stay in Honduras], and in general the contras do not have such an ideology. A few have said that even if they stop receiving US backing, they will continue military actions...One should be wary of these quixotic types. For my part, I believe in fighting the civic way, but it's their choice and I respect that. Q.: Was the National Dialogue between the opposition and the government important? Why? Guido: It was important in paving the way for more or less free and fair elections. Nowhere in the world can one have an impeccable electoral process. The Aug. 4 accord will motivate abstentionists to vote. The presence of the Organization of American States and the United Nations will serve as an adequate guarantee to fair elections. Q.: Do you believe basic conditions exist for your party to participate in the electoral process? Guido: It's too soon to say, but promises were made. The Civil Service law is being discussed in the National Assembly and that is important: to clarify the State-Party confusion. Advances are being made regarding other legislation, such as laws pertaining to media regulation and public order. But I worry about a lease and municipal rates law which was introduced in the Assembly before Aug. 4. It would violate the provision which prohibited the expropriation of private property for political reasons. Q.: Which demands made by you and your party were rejected? Guido: We introduced 21 issues and only seven of them were rejected. Q.: Do you believe the political milieu is better now than in 1984? Guido: I believe the FSLN will comply for the first time ever because they are under too much pressure. They have to hold clean elections. Q.: Why did your party decide to participate in the elections as an independent party, rather than joining the National Opposition Unity (UNO)? Guido: If we were to participate with other parties, we would lose the political capital we accumulated in 1984. We have 14 seats in the National Assembly and if we can retain those seats, then we would participate alongside other parties. Our presidential candidate is Eduardo Molina Palacios, a young candidate like the majority of voters. Q.: What is the margin of popularity of the FSLN in your view? Guido: The FSLN used to have about 62% and I believe it has lost about 10 to 15%, but it can still recover popularity with the efforts it is making for national reconciliation and peace. The Sandinistas want to hold free and fair elections so that in case they win, they can justify their rule and if they lose, to do so with dignity. The FSLN could not be ignored as a strong opposition party for 1996. Q.: What results do you anticipate from the elections? Guido: I believe Molina will win. Q.: What is your opinion regarding opinion surveys? Guido: Not good.
La Prensa's surveys contained leading questions which manipulated the respondent's answers. Q.: If the FSLN wins the elections, do you think the US government should normalize relations with Nicaragua? Guido: My feeling is that all the world's governments should leave Nicaragua in peace, but at the same time, the Sandinista government should behave responsibly and structure a government of national unity. Q.: What is your view on the subject of the US economic embargo? Guido: Embargoes have never solved anything anywhere. The US embargo was unable to overthrow Castro. Same thing happened here. The terrible economic situation is due to the war. The FSLN had to put its economic resources in the defense sector instead of in production. It has found other trade sources to compensate for the US embargo, not only in the Socialist bloc, but also Europe and Japan. Q.: What caused the proliferation of political parties in Nicaragua after 1979? Guido: Firstly, the caudillo phenomenon is very strong in Nicaragua. We haven't had a democratic tradition. We are learning it now. Our people don't believe in party platforms or programs. They follow people. When one person loses power or comes into conflict with someone else within the same political party, instead of staying and supporting the winner, he leaves and even takes the party's name with him. Secondly, after the revolution, there were some who didn't want a change and others who did. And the third reason was splits caused by arguments over finances. Q.: What is your opinion regarding US government financial assistance to the political parties? Guido: We are against it because it subjugates.

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